

Attorney Docket No. 27329.7413US

REMARKS

Claims 1-52 were pending in this application at the time the present Office Action was mailed. In view of the Office Action, the specification has been amended at paragraphs 13 and 14. Claim 1 has been amended only to correct a typographical error without narrowing the scope of the claim. Accordingly, claims 1-52 remain pending in the present application.

In the Office Action mailed September 12, 2003, the Examiner objected to the specification and claims on a number of grounds, and indicated that all of the claims are either allowed or would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the objections. More specifically, the status of the application in light of this Office Action is as follows:

(A) Claims 1-9 were objected to on the basis of informalities in claim 1, but would be allowable if the base claim was rewritten to overcome the objection;

(B) The specification was objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter in claims 5, 12, 15, 22, 23, 34, 37, and 39-52. These claims were indicated as being allowable if the specification is amended to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter; and

(C) Claims 10, 11, 13, 14, 16-21, 24-33, 35, 36, and 38 were allowed.

A. Response to the Objection to Claims 1-9

Claims 1-9 were objected to because of informalities in base claim 1. The typographical error in claim 1 has been corrected. Accordingly, claims 1-9 are now allowable and the objection to these claims should be withdrawn.

B. Response to the Objection to the Specification Regarding Claims 5, 12, 15, 22, 23, 34, 37, and 39-52

In the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that "a plurality of sealing projections extending radially inwardly into the central aperture and configured to sealably engage the elongated member" as recited in claims 5, 15, 22, and 34 is not adequately supported by the specification. Applicant respectfully disagrees and directs the Examiner's attention to paragraph 13 of the specification. Paragraph 13 of the

Attorney Docket No. 27329.7413US

specification states, *inter alia*, "the grommet body 20 is a flexible body that includes a plurality of flexible sealing ribs 26 that define part of the inner sealing surface 22. The sealing ribs 26 are shaped in size to compress against the outer surface 24 of the wire bundle 16 so as to form a substantially fluid tight seal . . ." (emphasis added). Accordingly, the specification fully supports the "plurality of sealing projections" in claims 5, 15, 22, and 34. Nonetheless, paragraph 13 has been amended to include the claim language identified by the Examiner to avoid any confusion. No new matter has been added. Therefore, the objection to the specification regarding subject matter identified in claims 5, 15, 22, and 34 should be withdrawn.

The Examiner also asserts in the Office Action that "a plurality of sealing projections extending radially outwardly between the engagement flanges into the central aperture and configured to sealably engage the structure adjacent to the aperture" as recited in claims 12, 23, and 37 is not adequately supported by the specification. Applicant respectfully disagrees and directs the Examiner's attention to paragraph 14 of the specification. Paragraph 14 of the specification states, *inter alia*, "[t]he grommet body 20 of the illustrated embodiment includes an outer sealing rib 32 projecting radially outward along part of the outer sealing surface 28 so as to press against and sealably engage the wall panel's aperture surface 30 when the grommet body 20 is positioned in the aperture 12" (emphasis added). Referring now to Figure 2, at least two outer sealing ribs 32 are illustrated pressing against and sealably engaging the wall panel's aperture surface 30. Accordingly, the specification fully supports claims 12, 23, and 37. Nonetheless, paragraph 14 has been amended to include the claim language identified by the Examiner to avoid any confusion. Therefore, the objection to the specification regarding subject matter identified in claims 12, 23, and 37 should be withdrawn.

The Examiner further asserts in the Office Action that the method of making a grommet assembly as recited in claims 39 and 46 is not adequately supported by the specification. Applicant respectfully disagrees and directs the Examiner's attention to paragraphs 22 and 23 of the specification. Paragraph 22 of the specification recites, *inter alia*, a process for manufacturing a grommet assembly 10. First, an annular-shaped biasing member is provided. In fact, inner and outer biasing members 44 and

Attorney Docket No. 27329.7413US

46 are provided. Next, "the inner and outer biasing members 44 and 46 are molded into and encased within a compressed, annular-shaped salt core. The salt core has a shape corresponding to the desired internal annular cavity 42 of the grommet assembly 10 shown in Figure 2."

Further, paragraph 23 states: "[a] flow of solvent, such as water or the like, is directed into the annular cavity 42 through the inlet channel and into contact with the salt core. The water dissolves the salt, and the dissolved salt and water are flushed out of the annular cavity 42 through the outlet channel. . . . After the salt core is dissolved and removed from the annular cavity 42, the inner and outer biasing members 44 and 46 are left behind, fully contained in the annular cavity 42 so that the inner biasing member will exert the radially inward force against the flexible rubber grommet body 20 and the outer biasing member will exert the radially outward sealing force against the grommet body." Accordingly, the specification fully supports all of the elements recited claims 39 and 46. Therefore, the objection to the specification regarding subject matter identified in claims 39 and 46 should be withdrawn.

C. Response to the Indication of Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 10, 11, 13, 14, 16-21, 24-33, 35, 36, and 38 were allowed. These claims have not been amended herein. While applicant's attorney agrees with the Examiner's conclusion that these claims are allowable, applicant's attorney notes that the claims may be allowable for reasons other than those indicated by the Examiner.

D. Conclusion

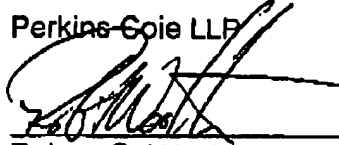
In view of the foregoing, the specification and claims pending in the application comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112 and patentably define over the applied art. A notice of allowance is, therefore, respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this

Attorney Docket No. 27329,7413US

application, the Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned at (206) 359-3259.

Respectfully submitted,

Perkins Coie LLP



Robert G. Woolston

Registration No. 37,263

Date: 11-14-03

Correspondence Address:

Customer No. 25096

Perkins Coie LLP

P.O. Box 1247

Seattle, Washington 98111-1247

(206) 359-8000